

against the abusive fees and practices of Wall Street.

JAPAN TRAGEDY

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise today to offer my deepest condolences to the people of Japan, and to reaffirm that the United States stands ready to assist the country and its people in this time of tremendous need.

On Friday, March 11, the world watched in horror as a devastating 9.0-magnitude earthquake struck off the northeastern coast of Japan, triggering a devastating tsunami that sent a 30-foot high wall of water hurtling into coastal towns and leaving complete destruction in its wake.

As a Senator from California, which has far too often experienced the devastation of earthquakes, I was horrified by the magnitude of this event.

In a stunning development, scientists are now saying that the quake caused the island of Japan to shift by 8 feet and the Earth's axis to move by 4 inches.

In Japanese cities such as Sendai and Minami Sanriku, entire communities and countless lives vanished in an instant. In Minami Sanriku alone, 10,000 members of a population of 17,000 remain unaccounted for.

The force of the tsunami generated by the quake was so great that waves traveled across the Pacific Ocean at more than 500 miles per hour, slamming into Hawaii and cities along the California and Oregon coasts.

Today, we know that an estimated 4,277 lives have been confirmed lost—a figure that will undoubtedly rise—and that hundreds of thousands have been displaced. In this time of extraordinary grief, our thoughts and prayers go out to those who have lost loved ones and to those whose family and friends remain missing.

What we also know is that without Japan's strict building codes and well-developed early warning systems, this terrible tragedy would have been much worse.

I praise the work of all the first responders who are working around the clock in Japan. Tens of thousands of Japanese rescue workers have been joined by teams from around the world, including from the United States and China.

I know that this includes a search and rescue team from Los Angeles County.

The team, which left for Japan on Saturday, is made up of 74 rescue personnel including firefighters and paramedics as well as six teams of search dogs who are trained to look for survivors trapped in debris left by the earthquake and tsunami.

There are also approximately 600 servicemembers from Naval Air Station Lemoore in California aboard the U.S.S. Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier, who are assisting relief efforts off the Japanese coast.

Our deepest gratitude goes out to all of those who are working tirelessly to

save lives and bring comfort to communities in need.

We also know that the earthquake and tsunami have caused tremendous difficulty at a number of nuclear energy facilities within Japan.

The damage and subsequent failure of systems at these nuclear reactors are a clear warning that we must step up efforts to ensure that every precaution is taken to safeguard all of our people from a similar nuclear disaster.

Special and immediate attention should be given to those nuclear reactors that share similar conditions as the failing reactors in Japan—those located near a coastline or fault line, or those with a similar design.

We must all reexamine our assumptions about what constitutes a credible threat to those reactors and ensure we learn the lessons shown to us by the recent events in Japan.

As chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, which has jurisdiction over domestic nuclear regulatory activities, I will ensure that our members have full briefings on all of these issues, and I will hold a hearing on the safety of the Nation's nuclear facilities and what lessons can be learned from the dangerous situation at the failing reactors in Japan. I am also calling on the NRC to conduct a comprehensive investigation of these issues, with a focus on areas that are especially vulnerable to seismic activity like California.

I would also like to spend a few moments talking about the approximately 300,000 Japanese-Americans who call California home.

I am particularly proud that the Japanese American community in my State has quickly stepped up to assist with relief efforts in the aftermath of this horrible tragedy. This includes the Japan America Society of Southern California—a nonprofit organization founded in 1909 to build relationships between the United States and Japan. This also includes the nonprofit Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California. These are just a couple of examples of how Californians are pulling together to help the thousands who have been devastated by the earthquake and tsunami.

I thank all those in California, and those across the country and the world, who have responded to this tragedy with an outpouring of support for the people of Japan.

I would also like to take just a brief moment to thank the Federal, State, and local officials in Hawaii, California and along the west coast for their quick response in warning residents of the tsunami threat and assisting those communities affected by severe waves.

Coastal areas in northern California, particularly Crescent City and Santa Cruz, were impacted by these waves, resulting in damages to port and harbor infrastructure. I am pleased that federal officials arrived in California Monday and are working with State and local officials to assess the situation.

And finally, I thank Senators REID, MCCONNELL, KERRY, and LUGAR for drafting a resolution on the tragedy which passed the Senate Monday evening. I am proud to be a cosponsor.

The resolution expresses the Senate's deepest condolences to all of those affected by this tragedy, including the families of the victims. It also urges the U.S. Government and the international community to provide any additional assistance the Japanese government may need as it moves toward healing, rebuilding, and recovery.

Experts tell us that events of this magnitude are rare—in fact, this was the largest recorded earthquake in Japan's history.

While we hope and pray that we never see such a horrific event again, this tragedy serves as a stark reminder of nature's extraordinary power and how precious and fragile life is.

Let us also use this as an opportunity to redouble our commitment here in America to do the hard work of preparing for the unthinkable.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CORPORAL LOREN M. BUFFALO

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise to honor the life of one of America's bravest killed in action in Afghanistan—CPL Loren M. Buffalo—a fallen hero who served our Nation in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Corporal Buffalo, 20, of Mountain Pine, AR, was by all accounts, driven by a call to serve his country and strong sense of civic duty.

The son of an Arkansas National Guardsman and the grandson of a World War II veteran, Corporal Buffalo joined the Army in 2009, just after graduating from Mountain Pine High School. His father, Cecil Buffalo, told *The Sentinel-Record*, that he knew his son wanted to serve his country all the way back in junior high. Mr. Buffalo said his son was a “strong-hearted all-American boy” who “loved his country and wanted to serve it.”

In Mountain Pine, Corporal Buffalo is remembered as a young man who would make the best out of any situation. One of his mentors said that Corporal Buffalo “was 100 percent about community.” During his teenage years, Corporal Buffalo undertook a number of projects honoring and supporting our Nation's veterans.

Beyond a life of service, Corporal Buffalo enjoyed making music. A multitalented musician, Mr. Buffalo said his son could play the guitar, drums, bass and “just about anything you put in his hand.”

Corporal Buffalo was assigned to B Troop, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division based out of Fort Campbell, KY. According to initial reports, he died from injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his dismounted patrol in Kandahar. He received multiple medals for service, including a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star.